



A quarterly newsletter of Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston (BGCB). Visit us on the web at www.bgcb.org.

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The Mission of BGCB

is to help boys and girls develop the qualities needed to become responsible citizens and leaders. To achieve this, we offer a variety of program activities and support service designed to assist in the educational, emotional, physical and social development of 6 to 18-year-olds, without regard to social, racial, ethnic, or religious background.

To unsubscribe to this quarterly newsletter, please reply to sender. If you know others who would want to hear about our activities, please "share with a friend" by forwarding this email. Thank you.

Blue Hill Club expands to serve 200 additional members

Following the successful renovation of the Yawkey Club of Roxbury, now able to accommodate 300 new members, the Blue Hill Club broke ground for a much-needed expansion. By July, the pool will be enclosed so that members can swim year-round, there will be a larger teen center and teen education room to serve the teen population, an improved commercial kitchen and eating area for the nutritious meals that are served nightly through the Kids Café, and a new performing arts center and fitness room with weight equipment.

Club Remix opens teens' minds and closes gaps

More than 40 teens from BGCB's Clubs participated in the 2nd annual Club Remix, a three-day retreat to confront issues of race, gender and identity. Produced by BGCB in partnership with the Boston Center for Community & Justice (BCCJ), and funded by a friend of both organizations, Club Remix helps youth gain a deep understanding of the power of stereotypes and oppression, enables them to link the effects of oppression to health concerns such as suicide, pregnancy, drug use, and violence, and empowers them to take action on these issues. "Club Remix is an opportunity for youth to speak about serious topics and feel supported by their peers. It is also the beginning of strong, healthy relationships," said Isidra Quinones, Teen Director at the Jordan Club in Chelsea, who co-directed the retreat.



Clubs guide teens in coping with community violence

Teen Unity Night is a new initiative that is bringing teens from all five Clubs together to break down barriers between neighborhoods as part of the effort to end community violence. At the launch, held at the Yawkey Club of Roxbury, the Club was buzzing with enthusiasm and a sense of harmonious energy, according to the Yawkey Club Teen Director Ronald Carroll. Teens had fun and were fully engaged, participating in tournaments in the teen center, challenging themselves on the gym's climbing wall and basketball court, swimming in the pool, and demonstrating their tech savvy in the Computer Clubhouse. The energy from the dance studio could be felt throughout the Club. At the end of the evening, the teens didn't want to leave – the best measure of a successful event.

BGCB helps teens prepare for college

The Charlestown Club hosted a meet-and-greet with college professors. The session allowed the College Club teens to ask questions including: How are courses different from high school? What does a syllabus look like? What are some course topics? What happens if I transfer? For many BGCB members who are the first in their families to apply to college, workshops like this are essential.

BGCB Board member Rodger Nordblom and his wife Dawn have established an endowed fund for our College Club to ensure that future generations of teens have the guidance and resources needed to apply to and attend college. To help make college accessible to members, BGCB administers several scholarships that reward academic achievement and community service, as well as assess financial need. Criteria vary, but most are available only to graduating high school seniors. They include the Francine Adams Scholarship, Kraft Giving Back Scholarship, Merit Scholarship, established by a former Board member, and Newbury College Scholarship. The Charlestown Club and the South Boston Club offer additional scholarships.

Volunteer program gets a boost

Volunteers play a key role in the advancement of BGCB's mission, serving as tutors, mentors, coaches, referees, and music instructors, for example. A capacity-building grant from The Boston Foundation is helping us strengthen our volunteer engagement activities for the benefit of the 13,000 youth we serve each year. BGCB's expanded volunteer effort encompasses outreach to identify partners for volunteer recruitment, development of a database for tracking applications and data, facilitation of orientation and training sessions, volunteer placement, assessment of placement effectiveness, and recognition of volunteers' contributions. In 2006, BGCB benefited from the wisdom and energy of 429 volunteers, 263 of whom were ongoing volunteers and 166 participated in one-day projects.

Compassionate YSPN social workers help families in need

A recent case involved Laura*, who became suicidal after witnessing a gang shooting. Our YSPN staff learned through our partnership with the Boston Police Department that gang members were threatening the already struggling and traumatized family; our YSPN social worker reached out, but initially the family was too mistrustful even to answer the door. With continued outreach, our social worker was able to meet with the family who shared that they were fearful of the gangs, authorities, and police due to violent, traumatic incidents in their home country. The social worker established trust by listening, advocating and providing resources that made the family feel safer and hopeful. As a team, the family and the social worker filed a police report, coordinated services with Laura's school and began counseling. Because of YSPN's skill in working with high-risk youth and families, the social worker was able to achieve a connection with the family. Laura and her family have now begun the process of healing. YSPN will continue to be there for this family as long as they are needed.

**Name has been changed to maintain confidentiality*

Math and science rule in South Boston Club

"The school environment can put a lot of pressure on kids, especially those for whom learning isn't always easy," says South Boston Club Education Director Josh Davis. "We look for programs that teach important math and science skills in a fun and different way." Davis has taken it one step further, partnering with other organizations to ensure that the programs are also cost-effective for the Club.

Oceans in Our Backyard teaches members, ages 9 to 12, about science through an examination of Boston Harbor. Field trips to Thompson's Island and a marine center at Northeastern University supplement in-Club learning. Math rules in *Cyberchase*, an internet-based program launching in fall 2007. Forty Club members, ages 8 to 11, will learn to work towards a common goal through group activities that develop logic and math skills as they try to outwit the bad guy in a series of adventures based on the animated public TV series. The South Boston Club is one of 11 Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide selected to participate in the program.

Alumni share memories at Annual Dinner

They may have attended different Clubs and have gone on to different careers – the Blue Hill Club's Keison Harry is a probation officer and Corey Gallagher, from Charlestown, works in advertising sales for a local TV station – however, their Club stories share many elements: trusted staff, inspiring programs, confidence-building opportunities, and feelings of safety were the common themes. As Keison told the audience of more than 500 business and community leaders, "The staff helped shape and mold me into the person that I am today. The Club Director was the father I never had." "Giving back to the Club is important to me," Corey said, "It makes me realize that I've become the kind of responsible citizen and effective leader the Club promised me I'd become."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit us on the web at www.bgcb.org/events for details about these and other upcoming events:

Annual House Party

Date: May 18, 2007
Time: 6:30 p.m.

4th Annual Friends of BGCB Event

Date: June 14, 2007
Time: 8:00 p.m.

CyberSummit

Thursday, April 19 – Friday, April 20, 2007

Yawkey Club of Roxbury

"Tech Survivor" is the theme of BGCB's 7th annual CyberSummit, a two-day event in which up to 100 youth will learn how to use cutting-edge software in a fun, social and non-competitive way. Following a day of hands-on workshops and a sleepover, participants host CyberFair, a showcase for their projects, which range from LEGO robots to original video documentaries. Learn more at www.bgcbcybersummit.org. Be a volunteer!

31st Annual Teen Recognition Awards

Wednesday, April 25, 2007
Seaport Hotel Boston

Recognition is an important part of BGCB's approach to developing leaders. The Teen Recognition Awards are given to Club members for their superior leadership skills, academic achievement, ability to overcome obstacles, and outstanding service to their Club and their community. BGCB will celebrate teens through various awards, including the Youth of the Year Award.

An Evening for Friends and Alumni

Saturday, April 28, 2007
6:15 p.m.

Charlestown Club
Keane Children's Center
Ansin Youth Center

The Charlestown Club invites you to a fun evening featuring wine tasting, comedy, dancing to the music of Eddie B. and Chris Fiore, Las Vegas Night, light buffet and cash bar; and raffles are available throughout the evening. Tickets are \$45 per person. All proceeds benefit the Charlestown Club.



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